

# <sup>1</sup>John Beaslin

Tape 309

Interviewed by Kathleen Irving, 2 November 2001

Transcribed by Marilyn Hunting, November 2002

Kathleen Irving (KI): This is Kathi Irving. I'm with John Beaslin. Today is 2 November 2001. We're at his office. So, John, do you just want to start at the beginning here?

John Beaslin (John): Whatever you want to do. I kind of went by the outline you had given me. If you'd like to put some of that stuff down, we could probably start with that.

KI: Sure, because I'd really like to know where you were born and your parents name and all that.

John: Okay. First of all, I was born in Dragon, Utah, on June 1, 1927. My father was John Lawrence Beaslin. My mother was Florence Emily Hayes. Ironically, in 1923 they were married in Vernal. When I picked up the marriage license, I notice they were on records here in Uintah County.

KI: So, where had they come from?

John: Primarily from Fruita, Colorado. See, we were living in Fruita at that time. I think they might have been living up around Atchee and that area when my dad first started to work on the old Uintah Railroad. Then, of course, we moved to Fruita. My older brothers, I've got two of them. I'll mention them here in a minute. I had two brothers, Larry and Lynn, they were twins, and then I have a younger brother, Tommy, all of whom are now deceased, however. So, then, in addition to that you asked a question... Sallie, my wife's true name is Ethel, but she doesn't want me to relate that to anybody particularly, but we were married on September 13, 1960. We have four children: Stacy Crouch, married to Mike, who works out at the American Gilsonite and has worked there ever since he got out of high school. He's been there for a little over twenty years now. They have three children, Brad, Jesse and Brenda. Then John Stewart Beaslin, my boy, and he is not married. Robert Allen Beaslin, his wife is Tatia Fergusen, they are expecting a child sometime in March or first part of April 2002. Our youngest daughter is Christy Jo Durrant, she is married to Brett Durrant and they have two little boys, Dakota who is ten and Austin who is seven.

Basically, going back kind of, to the history of what happened to me; we lived there in Fruita, Colorado 'til about 1939, then from Fruita we went on to Grand Junction for a year. I attended the 8<sup>th</sup> grade in Fruita, then in 1940 we moved to Salt Lake City, Utah. The Central School I went to in Fruita from the first to the seventh. Ironically, my two older brothers, the twins, were held back a couple of years so I caught up with them in the seventh grade. So we had all three boys in the same 7<sup>th</sup> grade in Fruita. The same in Grand Junction. I went to the Jr. High there for a year and then went to Salt Lake to Bryant Jr. High, up on First South between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> East. Then I went to Granite for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>.

When I graduated in 1945 from Granite, I then went into the service, into the Navy. World War II was just ending at that time. I was in Chicago in August when the war ended. I was attending school there, going to radio tech school I had applied for. I wanted to be a pilot and fly, at that time, not jets but just planes, because that was thing to do for young kids, I thought. So, subsequently, I attended the University of Utah when I got back. Then I was in the Reserves, so I went back to Korea for a couple of more years and happened to be called into the Korean War. Then I went to Law School and graduated with a Bachelors of Science and Law in 1954. Then I got a Doctors of Jurisprudence in 1955.

KI: What is the difference between those two degrees?

John: Well the Bachelors of Science and Law, they no longer have that. It is merely doing the required subjects, not in law school, they are out of law school. Then you do a three years in law school, generally. You take a lot of politics, philosophy, history, political science, those kind of classes that you take prior to going to law school, before you get into law school subjects. So that was my first degree, BSL. That was my Bachelors then I got a Doctor of Jurisprudence.

KI: So how long did that take?

John: Six years all together. I was fortunate, having been in the service at the end of World War II and also in the Korean War, I picked up credits, so I had probably had twenty-five, thirty hours, so I didn't have to do physical ed or any of those kind of classes that would have been required of most young students. I just went into it direct.

You asked questions of some of the things we did when we were younger. We did a lot of swimming. Of course, in those days we didn't have a lot of swimming pools and I was just a little guy 'til we got to Grand Junction. We would mostly go swimming in canals, in our free time. We didn't worry about polio in those day, we just jumped in the dirty ditch and that's where we went. That's the way you learned to swim. If you swam to the other side, that was okay and if you didn't, you didn't.

I remember back in the early thirties when I was five or six years old, we had a great big, black, 1933 Pontiac that my dad had purchased. My mother drove it and we'd pick all the neighborhood kids up and go out to the canal. We also had a lot of ice skating ponds there. I worked in the bowling alley for a while in Fruita. We had a little rolling skating rink in Fruita also.

Of course, subsequent to that I did a lot of snowmobiling and boating and fishing, all of those kind of things, after we moved to Vernal. There is always plenty of things to do as young kids, always getting trouble wherever we could. We had four Beaslin boys and they were pretty well known around Fruita.

KI: Do you want to back up and tell me about your experiences in Dragon?

John: Basically in Dragon and over in Atchee we would take the train from Fruita to Atchee, then on up to Watson and Dragon. It was a daily run. Of course, when we'd get home from school, my dad, being the conductor on the railroad, would always be there. They ran the clock on time, just a like a regular true railroad, so at 3:48, or whatever [time] it was, my dad was generally home. He would leave early in the morning, make the trip and come home, a daily

trip. As I recall, it was a five-day trip during the week at that time. Every day, all through the year. They bucked a lot of snow up there on Baxter Pass. They had a lot of snow. Of course, they hauled Gilsonite, cattle, sheep, passengers, whatever wanted to go.

Of course, you recall from the history of it, what they did. They had a stagecoach that ran from Watson to Vernal, so when you got to end of the line at Watson, then you would get off the train and get on the stagecoach and come across the Green River and come into Vernal.

KI: Stagecoach? As in pulled by horses, even when you were a kid? Not a car?

John: Yeah. Oh yeah. Not a car, stagecoach. They did that 'til they got cars later on. Later on in the thirties they got trucks and cars and hauled Gilsonite by truck, but prior to that it was what they called the stagecoach run. They would bring them over to Alhandra Ferry, get on the ferry, come across the river, then on into Vernal. It was quite a long trip. Of course, we didn't do that when we were little kids. I do recall taking the train up, rather frequently. We would take the train up to Atchee and mess around up there. Roy Eno was the engineer. His son later became a yard master over in Helper, Utah, with the D&RGW. Of course, that's what my dad did also.

After they disbanded the railroad in 1938, we then left Fruita, went to Grand Junction and my dad started with the D&RGW Railroad. That's when we moved to Salt Lake. Once we went to Salt Lake, my dad stayed on the D&RGW there and ran from Salt Lake to Helper, Helper to Grand Junction, on the D&RGW there. It was kind of an interesting life. We did a lot things.

Primarily up in Dragon, I was just a little guy so didn't do a great deal up there until the latter part of the thirties. We then moved out to my grandparents' ranch. My dad had two brothers, Tom and Bill. Uncle Tom never did have any children and he and my aunt Mary lived at the ranch that my grandfather had, their father and mother. Uncle Bill had two kids, Dorothy, who is still alive, she's my cousin and still lives in Fruita; Buddy, her brother, passed away. He was in the service for quite awhile, went to Alaska, did a lot of things, never got married. My Aunt Ruby and Uncle Bill passed away in '38 and '39. They contracted some disease at that time. It wasn't really cancer. The neighbors in Fruita took in Dorothy and Buddy.

We lived out on the ranch with Uncle Tom for a while. We had a terrible accident, the house burned down, the old family home. My Uncle Tom was a carpenter and he built another home right on the old homestead. That old homestead is now a sub-division. I was there a couple or three weeks ago. The north eighty acres is now filled with new homes. When I was there, we had to hoe the beans, do all that kind of stuff for Uncle Tom. He had bean crops and hay there.

I recall, as a little guy, we had two big old Percherons. They were called Mutt and Jeff. We also had a black mare. Uncle Tom plowed and worked in the late '30s with those horses. Those big Percherons were big and beautiful.

One thing we did there in Fruita—the house we lived in in Fruita, north of the Central Park, the backyard ran back quite a-ways, several hundred feet. We had a big garden. In that garden, my mother raised everything. My brothers and I had a wagon and we would fill up that wagon with produce and go sell them, five cents a bunch for whatever you got. We would sell corn, I don't know what, it was maybe forty cents a dozen, five cents for radishes and things like that. We could make a little spending money while growing up.

KI: Did your dad make a pretty good living?

John: Oh yeah. Another thing I recall, too, was the fact that even during the Depression, it seemed we didn't really have a great deal of suffering by way of having food and so forth. Of course, Dad had a good job on the railroad. During the Depression, like I say, we had a car salesman that would come to sell my dad automobiles, all sorts of vehicles. We always had a big Pontiac or big Buick or whatever during that entire time. Prior to the time of going to junior high or high school, we did pretty well. In fact, when we got into high school we had a big '37 Pontiac at that time. This would have been in the early '40s after I turned sixteen. I was eager to get into the car business, like all sixteen-year-olds.

Gordie Davies, my friend, and I, we could only get the car, after I got my license. I was a junior and senior in high school. Gordie and I could only get the car and take it out, possibly only once a week. We didn't take it to work or to school, we didn't do anything. So Gordie and I would spend Saturday morning scrubbing up that car. We would put the white wall on the tires, we'd scrub it up and wax it. We did a great job on the car. We wanted to make it look nice when we took out the girls we were chasing at the time. This was when we lived in Salt Lake and I was going to Granite.

KI: Did you have a very good football team at that time?

John: Oh yeah. In fact, we had what they called a YAL, a Young American League. I played basketball, football and baseball and I got a lot of patches that they gave us at that time. In fact, I played football for the Rotary. There was a Rotary Club in Grand Junction that sponsored us and we played out at Lincoln Park. We played on Saturday mornings. I was on the Rotary team. It worked out alright. I've been a Rotarian for some forty years, ever since I joined the Rotary here in Vernal clear back in 1961.

I played a lot of basketball. When I moved to Salt Lake, we had a great team there. I was going to the Central Park Ward until they found I was going to the wrong ward. They said, "Hey, get out of here, you don't belong over here." I said, "What do you mean I don't belong here.?" They said, "You have to go over to Wandermere up on 7<sup>th</sup> East." So, I said okay.

When we moved up there, Neal Maxwell, one of the LDS apostles now, Neal was my neighbor. He lived about a block away from me. I lived on 465 East Sunset which was 28<sup>th</sup> South and 5<sup>th</sup> East, just off from the Nibley Park Golf Course. Neal lived a little bit west and around the corner. Neal Maxwell, together with Ralph and Clair Emery, whose father was the caretaker of Nibley Park, all got together up at Wandermere and played basketball together. We had another kid by the name of Page, Robert Page, so the five of us put together a pretty good team. I played a lot of basketball. Two and three times a week, I was playing ball. When I went into the Navy the first time, end of World War II when I was eighteen, we had a couple of kids from Murray High School, Max Barnett and Jay Hamblin, Jay Jensen and myself, and we picked a kid from Wisconsin or someplace. We won the tournament in the Great Lakes when we first went back into Great Lakes for training.

I had previously joined the Navy in April prior to my eighteenth birthday. My birthday was on June first and I was in Great Lakes, Illinois, in the Navy then. As soon as I got out of school, the sixteenth or seventeenth of May, I took off for Great Lakes in the Navy.

KI: You were still in training when the war ended?

John: No, I was in school in Chicago. I had since gone to a little bit of boot camp in Great Lakes, then went to Chicago to school. They had what they called Wright's Jr. College and I left junior college. They kicked us out of the junior college after the war ended in August with Japan.

KI: Because you were in the Navy, you were in school in Chicago? So then what happened after they kicked you out?

John: They kicked us out and sent us to California and we went out to sea. While we were there, I was eighteen. I met a friend who was a good tackle at Granite High School, Brent Carlile. Brent and I got together at the same base. While we were there, we were shipped out of San Diego. When we went there, we didn't know where we were going, of course. They just said, "Pack up, you're leaving!" So, when we took off, we went out to the ship. Here was the Battleship Maryland. Wow! Here we are eighteen years old and scared to death and here's this great monster ship. Boy, are our eyes wide open, seeing this great, big monster ship tied up to the pier. At that time we had what was called a rolling sea bag, you carried your sea bag and all that stuff with you, now it's already there and you just carry a suitcase. In those days we carried the old sea bag. It was still the old Navy then. We had our sea bags.

Brent and I went to Hawaii the first time. The next trip I took I was on a hospital ship called Ernestine Coranda. We left Honolulu, went to Cavite which is just out of Manila, which is a naval base. I stayed there for a little while. After we went to Cavite, we shipped out. I got what we call an APD, Auxiliary Patrol Destroyer. The APD I was on went over to Viet Nam, what is now called Viet Nam. It was Haiphong, French Indochina then. We pulled into there a couple of times. We had the LST Flotilla 22, had the Admiral aboard our ship.

At that time we were repatriating and taking Japanese prisoners, Japanese soldiers who had gone clear down into the Philippines, we were repatriating them, putting them on LSTs and taking them back to Japan. This would have been in 1945. It was in 1945 and '46 that we did all of that. Subsequent to that, I went back to the States and ultimately got back with the LPD. Later, I went through the Panama Canal and up to Philadelphia, did a little repair work on the ship, then we put it out of commission at Green Coves Springs, Florida. I came home from that and started at the university.

KI: How many years were you in active duty?

John: Altogether, I was in active and inactive duty about sixteen. I was in the active reserves from the time I got back from World War II until Korea in '50. After I came back from Korea, I stayed in the reserve until about 1958 or '59. Then I moved to Vernal in 1960.

KI: Just after you graduated from school you came here?

John: No, I had five years in Salt Lake. I opened my Salt Lake office December 1, 1955. I got married September 13, 1960, then Sallie and I moved out to Vernal and I've been here ever since.

I kept my Salt Lake office till 1987. I went back and forth between Salt Lake and Vernal for a long time, from 1955 to '87. I had a partnership with John Anderson who is now the district court judge here in town. John had been previously been in our Salt Lake office, also before 1980, when he moved to Vernal. He was with me from 1980 until he went on the bench in 1993.

KI: When you were in Korea, did you see active duty?

John: Yeah. I got a couple or three stars and all that stuff. In Korea, I don't know how I got them. When I got shipped out, they said, "You got your ribbon and two stars," and I said okay. We did Inchon a couple of times, did a little firing on ships and that kind of stuff, dropped a few troops, so you get a star for just being there. So, I got a couple of stars for that. In the navy, I went all over the place, it was a great experience, I enjoyed it. Of course, I wasn't married at the time. Had a lot of good shipmates. I still write to them. At Christmas I write probably eight or ten members that were on the various ships I was on.

In Korea, what I did there I was on LST 1101. When I was called back on the reserve, I went down to San Francisco, then I caught a plane to Seattle, Bremerton, Washington. I put a ship back into commission that had been worked on. I went aboard that ship and stayed on it and went all over Japan, China, and everywhere back overseas in the Far East at that time prior to the time we came back home to San Diego. I was then discharged from the Korean War. Spent another two and a half years there. Then I went back to law school and graduated in 1955.

KI: What made you want to go into law?

John: A long time ago I decided. I knew a young Italian Catholic boy by the name of Arceri. The Arceri family had been around Grand Junction for a long time. Georgie and I used to cut lawns. He later went into the postal service. He had diabetes and passed away later. In cutting lawns, we cut lawns for three or four attorneys. Made our money doing that. That probably got me started. I really wanted to be a lawyer. I always wanted to be a lawyer. It wasn't easy.

My parents divorced in the middle forties. So, when I was in the service the first time, I then thought about when I came back whether or not I was going to go ahead and stay in the navy or not. Because by then my mother and dad were divorced and I wasn't sure where I was going to stay or live or whatever. I then met Don Trobaugh whom I had known in school. He was two years younger than I am. He kind of became my step-brother. I then moved in with him, his mother was not married. So Don and my step-mother, I moved in with them.

Don then went into the navy, after the World War II, for a while. He was in about four years. While he was there, he married a WAVE from New York, Kathy, his wife. He got married and came back to Salt Lake later, lived there for a while, then moved to Colorado. I stayed there; her grandfather was a lawyer. Gramp was a lawyer in Kuna, Idaho, which is just a little ways north from Boise.

Through their help and also with my GI Bill I had, from both Korea and World War II, I was able to go to law school. By doing that, I was able to study and I just didn't do a lot of things while I was going to school.

KI: So your parents were already divorced when you moved to Salt Lake?

John: No. They were not divorced until about 1944. They were still together when we moved to Salt Lake in 1940. But I was in the service during that time. When I came back, my mother had remarried and they moved to Borger, Texas. He was in the army at Kearns, at an army base there. She and he moved to Texas and I didn't have anyplace to stay and I had to make a decision at that time. I'm 21 years old and I had to decide what am I going to do with my life. Either I was

going to go to school if I could, or go back in the service. By getting the help of grandparents and Don and Elsie, we were able to make a deal so I could stay with the family. The other thing good about it, the fact that I moved, had I not moved to Salt Lake, I have thought of this many times, I may have not gone to college or done a lot of things. You never know what may have happened to your life.

KI: Did your dad still live in Salt Lake?

John: Oh, yes. He stayed in Salt Lake 'til he passed away in 1965. He was still with the DR&G then. He retired as an engineer. Ran that system for a long time before he retired.

KI: Do you remember how he got the job working for the Uintah Railway?

John: I don't recall. Mack, Colorado, was just a little ways out of Fruita and Grand Junction.

We came in from Glenwood about six weeks ago, we had been up to see my former law partner, Clayton Simmons, who used to own the Antlers Motel here. When we moved to Vernal, we lived at the Antlers Motel, Sallie and I. We were buying half of the Antlers. Carolyn is Clayton's sister, who now has bought both of us out.

We were over there and I was reading a history of the Catholic churches on the Western Slope. Of course, the Beaslin Family were Irish Catholic. As a result of that, there was a story in the book that tells about how the Beaslin family, my parents and my dad's folks, had helped build the Catholic church in Fruita. I remember my dad being an altar boy and helping out at the church when we were little kids. Then there was a "Little Brethren Church," that's still in Fruita also, I went to years and years ago. The pastor of that church was Mr. Hoover. He had a couple of boys and went to church with them in Fruita. When we went to Salt Lake, I went to the Methodist Church up on 2<sup>nd</sup> East and 2<sup>nd</sup> South. It was a real nice church. Dr. Bainbridge was the minister there.

KI: What are your memories of Dragon? What did it look like?

John: The pictures that you see here. Basically, it was just like a camp town. Kind of like Kennecott Copper was for years. Just small homes, as shown here in the pictures of Atchee. I recall Atchee quite vividly. When I was a little guy in the '30s, we could drive up there in our cars. Once in a while we would drive up there, as opposed to taking a train. If we drove up there, we would generally stay over at someone's house for several days or the weekend. The shop is illustrated in the pictures in the book "Uintah Railway." (Just for the record the book is *The Uintah Railway Pictorial* by Roger Polling.) Roger lives in Grand Junction, and wrote this first book and is currently working on a second volume, which would take you all the way up from Atchee. This book volume takes you from Mack to Atchee. So, in answer to your question, I recall Dragon, itself, was really quite small, although they did have a hotel there, it was quite a nice building.

Don Barr, whose father was the telegrapher there at Dragon, he would send the messages to keep the train going, using the telegrapher key that they used in those days. Don Barr was at the Bank of Vernal for many years. Dragon was real small little town as I recall. But Atchee was pretty active. As you went up there, they had their big buildings. That's where they did the repairs on all the cars and quite a number of families lived there. I recall my Aunt Rosie, my

mother's youngest sister, who's still alive and lives in Grand Junction. She's 87, she's the last of the family. Aunt Rosie recalls the families being there and living there for a while.

As you leave Atchee to go towards Watson, there is a big wash that cuts through and, of course, the train goes over the trestle and they had a big pit there and they would drop the ashes out of the hot box, what they called the hot box, when the ashes would get hot they would drop them down in the wash. I recall a bunch of us kids took a little flatcar, I was about nine or ten at that time. There was about six of us. We took the flatcar and pushed it up on the track beyond the trestle, like we were going into Watson, uphill. We all jumped on it and came down and in doing so we hit the side rail. Boom! We all jumped off. When we did, we crashed, smacked that car. We hit into the back of the caboose. That was the last time we did that.

Another time, Billy Barlow, his father was on the railroad also, he was a big strapping kid. He had some big boots on and one time in Atchee he kicked and killed a porcupine. We took that porcupine out to the chute where the trestle was, dropped it down in a wash and got rid of that porcupine. We had a good time. We did crazy thing like that. We had a fun childhood there.

From our house, and about a block away, there was a blacksmith shop, a fellow by the name of Joe Nixon, I'll never forget him. He had an outhouse and about every Halloween we tried to make sure we dumped it over. I remember going to school a couple of times and them coming and picking up the Beaslin boys and saying, "You better go pick it up and put it back. We know who did it." So we picked it up.

Up the street from where we lived was a big stone house. The people that lived there at that time was Lafe Young. They had a lot of kids and they were about our ages. He was a sheep man. Then in the next house was the George Standiferd family. They had about nine kids also. They ran cattle out in the Book Cliffs. I remember when I was about twelve, Mr. Standiferd had a big International truck. He used to take us kids with him out to the range to check on the cattle, I recall he chewed tobacco and he asked me if I wanted some. As a young kid I didn't care, and I took some and I was sick for three days. I won't do that again.

With Dad on the railroad, we could get a pass and, of course, we had an aunt that lived up in Twin Falls, Idaho, my mother's sister, Annie, we all loved her. We'd get a pass once in a while and take train trips during the summer.

KI: What does DR&GW stands for?

John: Denver and Rio Grande Western. We had passes, we'd go all over, California, Idaho, Montana and different places.

We always, kinda, had Christmas in August. School started in September. We had a mail order house from Spiegel. When we went to the first day of school, boy, we were dressed up. We had new corduroys, new shirts, new shoes, everything; we started the school year right. I remember my mom and dad would get these big boxes from Spiegel. That started us off in school, clothes for all the kids. That was a big event, kind of like Christmas early.

I've been a Mason now for nearly fifty years. I have a lot good Masonic brothers all over the state.

KI: Did you go through DeMolay?

John: No, I didn't have that opportunity. I joined in Salt Lake and was in our Argenta Lodge Number 3 back then in the early '50s and have been a member ever since then.



I am a past president of the Utah State Bar and I was also president of the law school when I was there in 1954-55. I was also what you call the magister of Phi Delta Phi, which is a legal fraternity, and also a Junior Bar President of the Utah State Bar before I was president of the Bar. We have just hundreds and hundreds of friends with reference to those activities that we have been involved in. One of the things it gave us a great opportunity, of course, was to travel a great deal. We've traveled a lot in the last thirty years in all the capacities that I've had as chairman and president of many organizations. As you know, I have plaques in there and I only have part of them on the wall, I've got a lot more. I've been very fortunate over the years.

I was on the Centennial Commission of Utah for seven years. Arden Stewart was my chairman in Uintah County, then we had chairmen for each of the counties. That was a great experience, met a lot of nice people there and had a good time. The friends and families we've met and associated with, we can go just anywhere, particularly in the state of Utah, and know so many.

KI: One of the awards you have received was the Hyrum Award. That was a Masonic award.

John: The Hyrum Award is given because of the activities that you do, that they honor you with. It is given for outstanding service. We only have four that we have given out in our Lodge so far this year: Willis Stevens, Blaine Corbin, Tom Aldridge and myself. Clayton Hatch and Jerry Hatch, we gave it to them a year last May. The two Hatch brothers have been very, very active in Masonry for a long period of time. Those were the last two we gave out.

KI: Who is that award named after?

John: Hyrum Abiff. He is a church and biblical character. He is known throughout Masonic circles. Very few are given, but the members of the lodge vote for you to obtain the Hyrum Award. It is quite a prestigious award.

KI: Tell me your impression of the Masonic Order in Utah.

John: First of all you have to realize we only have 2,586 members, opposed to Texas with 10,000 15,000 or 20,000. It is a great organization. It is the oldest in the world. It started clear back in the 1700s back in England and Scotland and has come over since that time. One of the things we believe in, of course, is the it "makes good men better." That is the basic philosophy of Masonry. That is what we try to do and we have some very good members throughout the whole state. There is no restriction as to race, color, creed. It is just a men's organization, as least at this point. The women have not made inroads there yet.

KI: They do have the Eastern Star.

John: Oh, yes. I'm a past Grand Patron of Eastern Star. I've been a Star member since 1966.

KI: Tell me how that works. My grandmother was member of the Eastern Star forever and when she passed away they did a Masonic service.

John: What it is, basically, Eastern Star was set up primarily for the purpose of having the relationship for the women. They, too, could have an organization where they, too, could become part of the Masonic affiliation. In order to become a member of the Eastern Star you had to have some Masonic affiliation to let you in. I just got back from Grand Chapter in Salt Lake the other day. Here again, we only have, I think the latest statistics are about 2,800-2,900 members. So it isn't big in Utah.

KI: Men don't actually join, do they? It isn't the same thing as women joining Eastern Star? You said you're a patron.

John: I'm a Past Grand Patron, then you have the Matron, she is the gal. They become what they call the "five star points." But the men can occupy others. We have the associate patron, we have patron, associate patron, secretary, chaplain, secretary-treasurer, those can all be men or women. We have Grand Chapter each year and then we a General Grand Chapter that meets every three years. Our General Grand Chapter committee member, Paula Argus, who is the Past Grand Matron of Utah is now the Worthy Grand Organist of that group. She is a great gal, she lived in Tooele for a long time. Her father was Senator Mantes. She is a great organist and a teacher. She was a schoolteacher also. She is now on tour for the next three years with the Grand Family.

When you are in the Grand Family of Utah, of course, you go to every one of the twenty-six chapters in Utah. When you are in the Grand Lodge Line you also go to the thirty-one lodges in Utah every year. Sometimes we have joint meetings there, but you join in those meetings also. That's what Jim Murphy was [the interviewer's uncle]. He was Grand Master. As a result of him being a Grand Master, he then went to every lodge, he still does. He is Grand Treasurer. I see Jim all the time.

Of course, I have been secretary of the Lodge down here for well over twenty years, maybe twenty-five. I'm also a 33<sup>rd</sup> Scottish Rite, that's as high as you can go in the Scottish Rite. I'm also the past director of the Royal Order of Jesters. I belong to the Royal Order of Scotland and York Rite. I'm a Knight Templar in the York Rite, Royal Scots of Utah, and also I belong to the Red Cross of Constantine, which is a group of York Rite Masons. I'm also a member of the El Kalah Shrine, have been for over forty years, since 1961. I just had my fortieth year as a Shriner also. As you know, we have a wonderful organization. We have a new \$38 million hospital in Salt Lake that we dedicated four years ago in June, on my birthday, as a matter of fact, June first.

At our barbeque this year we had 862 that we fed, not counting the kids that came. We then donated \$10,000. We gave \$2,000 to our local lodge, we gave \$500 to the Scottish Rite Learning Center and \$7,500 to the Shrine Hospital. We made about \$10,000 on different projects that we have. Last year we donated about that same amount, just from our little group. We don't have that many Shriners or Masons here in the Basin, but everyone chips in. Actually, we have twenty-five active Masons that live here in Vernal and about forty-five members. They are scattered through the United States because they have left here, but they are still members of our lodge. Many times you do that, can have what we call "dual members." Many times you have a dual member, but they will dual up some other place, in some other state, but still keep their lodge where they first started. We have a fellow who is in Saudi Arabia, John Brown. He is still a member here. He joined when he was here with the oil patch, then he went to Saudi and now he is in Texas. I'm secretary and I know where they are and have their addresses, take care of the dues cards, and all those duties that secretaries do. I know all of them.

KI: Another thing I read about was that you were involved with the Dinosaurland Travel Board.

John: Right. I have been on the Travel Board since 1974. I'm the only one who has been on that long, nobody else has survived. I don't know why I stay on, to be honest with you. 1974 was the year we started the transient room tax in Utah and that money comes in for the purpose of advertising. We obtain the transient room money that comes back to our county and we spend it on a lot of advertising. We have a budget of about \$180,000 a year. We spend a lot of money to promote the area: advertising, books and make pamphlets. We have the one-day tour you see around town. Dinosaurland Advertising did that before. I was also on that board. I started on that board in 1960. We disbanded that because too many things took over, then the Dinosaurland Travel Board took over. Lori Olmstead is the director now.

KI: What is different about Vernal since you moved here in 1960? What major changes have you seen?

John: It's just marvelous. The improvements of Vernal since that time are just tremendous. Well, first of all the highway has improved considerably, a great deal in that forty-year period. As you know, the old roads, including the highway going down Parley's Canyon, were narrow and more dangerous at that time. Particularly into Heber.

All the new buildings, the cleanliness of Vernal. The shopping centers. The renovations of the old buildings, the flower project. We have about 1,000 of those now. Our new \$8 million courthouse that we just dedicated last Tuesday. Those come to mind immediately.

I think it has been a good growing pattern. Plus the fact we have a lot of nice new homes up in Maeser and Dry Fork Canyon. Flaming Gorge, we have the condos at the lodge and Red Canyon Overlook. Red Canyon Lodge has improved and made a nice area for everybody to come and go. Dedication of the dam in 1962-63 when Lady Bird Johnson was here. I have had a boat up there ever since then. Recreation, deer hunting

KI: Is that what kept you in Vernal when you first moved out here? Or did you just know you were going to stay?

John: Well, pretty much. What really got me interested was when Clayton wanted to quit practicing law in 1960 and he wanted to go to Salem, Oregon. His wife, Mary, had family up there.

We took over the practice of a fellow by the name of Clyde Johnson (Bus). He died in December 1956, we had just started our law office in Salt Lake. Clayton owned the Antlers Motel at that time and he was running the motel and working part-time in our Salt Lake office. He said, "Why don't you buy half of the motel and do the law office because we are going to leave." I said, "Well, okay, we'll try it out." So, as a result of that, we got married in September and moved to the motel and lived there for a while. Then we lived on 2½ North, our first house in Vernal. Then I ran my law office and the Antlers Motel for a while. Then I moved my office where the police station is now, 447 East Main, Bill Slauch building, where the Cadillac dealership is now, that long building, we used to be there. Then we moved into this building a long time ago. Our address here is 185 North Vernal Ave.

That was quite an incentive to buy half-interest in the Antlers Motel and also move here and get out of Salt Lake. I had been in Salt Lake for five years in my law practice then.

You ask me a question when we got married. I married Sallie Congdon. We were married by Chief Justice Crockett of the Supreme Court at the Memorial Grove in Salt Lake. He was a great old man, we loved Judge Crockett. In fact, he and Judge Ellett used to come out and take a river trip with us. We had a bunch of dumb lawyers who would take a river trips once in a while. We would get on the rafts and come down from Echo Park, or wherever, and float the Green, have a good time. They were with us. He and Judge Ellett. Judge Ellet later became Justice of the Supreme Court also.

KI: Do you remember any controversial issues in the community?

John: There have been a few. I don't recall anything specifically.

KI: Another issue that I was wondering about, you're aware of the book, "Behind Swinging Doors." I had an interesting time researching liquor laws as they applied to Indians. It wasn't until 1953 that the Indians were actually just given the same sort of civil rights that everyone else had to drink if they wanted to. About that time, in the mid-fifties, they had, unfortunately, quite a few incidents of public drunkenness among the Indian population. Now, I don't see that myself, just driving down the street, like it used to be.

John: I do. I see quite a lot of it, as a matter of a fact. What happens now, of course, is that if they are picked up on DUIs and so forth, they have jurisdiction and they then go over to the court. They either go to Indian court, depending on whether they are on the reservation or not, or to our court. I do see quite a lot of that in my practice over the past several years. Of course, there is a history. Of course, you know Bottle Hollow, and the reason it got its name is because they would take all their whiskey bottles and throw them back on the south side of the road there, and that's how it got its name.

KI: The cavalry that was stationed there had a lot to do with that.

John: Yeah, they had a lot to do with it at that time. They'd fill up the canyon back there with bottles and that's why they called it Bottle Hollow. But, it's still a problem. It's a real problem, in fact, there was a lady there the other day had a .22. I had another one, well, I've had hundreds of them, but, it's still a problem, and it's a still problem because of the unemployment. They have nothing to do. If you're unemployed, then many of them sit around and drink. So, as a result of that, we still have the problem *on* the reservation, unfortunately. Yeah, unfortunately, we do.

KI: They don't sell liquor by the drink especially. They have no bars over on the reservation, do they?

John: No, not now. But they do have, up at the top, the Hilltop. The Hilltop was run as kind of like an open bar by one of their members, and they were serving drinks over the bar.

KI: That's a problem that I feel badly about. It's a social problem for the tribe.

John: Well, primarily they do that. Of course, because they're closer to Roosevelt, you would see the purchasing of alcohol at the liquor store in Roosevelt more so than here. You don't see an awful lot of them here in Vernal, the Indian population, but you do in Roosevelt, quite a bit.

KI: Do you remember the Shamrock Club?

John: Oh, sure.

KI: Did you have to be a member of the club to go in?

John: Oh, no, no.

KI: That was just a regular walk-in?

John: Yeah. Hunt Watkins owned that and when Hunt was there you could go into the Shamrock. When I moved to Vernal, any of the bars were open then. At the time you didn't have to be a member. The only time we ever had a membership was down at the old Empire Club. The Empire Club, when I first came to Vernal in the sixties, no, during the fifties, because I wasn't married at that time, when I first started coming to Vernal in 1957, we'd go down to the Empire Club, at that time, and you could play pool and dance and do whatever. It was quite a nice little club. It later evolved into the country club. The old Empire Club, the members there, all of us, bought memberships in the country club when Russ Kier and all of them came by and said, "John, give us two or three hundred dollars," and I said, "What do you want that for, Russ?" And he said, "Well, we're going to start a country club." And I said, "Well, okay, we'll start a country club." So we did.

We did have a nice country club. I sat on that board several times, also. We had a nice, little country club down there for quite a while before it burned down. It worked out quite well. You could take your friends down there, if they'd come in from out of town, and so forth. That gave them a nice, clean place to go and have dinner. During that period of time we had quite a number of chefs who were pretty good, actually. The food was pretty good and reasonable and they could have a drink if they wanted it. It worked out fine.

KI: Do you remember the Knife and Fork Club?

John: Yep, I was the president. In fact, I was the last president of the Knife and Fork Club before it died out. That was a good experience. Sallie and I enjoyed that a great deal.

KI: Did you still meet over in the Hotel Vernal?

John: Yep. That's where we met. We had a lot of good members at that time. Then when it started dying down because of lack of membership, I was the last president of the Knife and Fork Club in Vernal.

KI: I hear that was a very nice, pleasant thing to do.

John: Yes, very nice. We had some very good speakers. We had Frank Layden, I recall. We had a lot of folks who came out and spoke to us. It was just like the Rotary Club is, or any other club, where you try to attract different people to come out, just like they did the other day with Thurl Bailey. You know, to get Thurl out here the other day was really great. That was a good luncheon and a lot of fun.

It was great to be able to do that and that's what we did. We had an agenda. Salt Lake had a really, really good Knife and Fork Club. Many times what we'd do is go piggy-back. In other words, if Salt Lake had a speaker there on like a Friday night, we'd maybe try to book that same speaker from out of town or out of the country or whatever, on a Saturday night in Vernal because they could get here the next day. So, we piggy-backed quite a bit and did that and it was very enjoyable. We would have generally six meetings, as I recall, about six meetings a year, and primarily during the fall and spring. We generally didn't have any during the summer. Yeah, the old Knife and Fork Club was very, very nice. Dr. Seager was there, Dr. Stringham, we had everybody.

We had a great time. We had a good party there and everything worked out very well. Everybody kind of dressed up a little bit and went down. It worked out nice. I was trying to put together some numbers because I can visualize when we had our meetings, when I was president, and we had, oh, possibly, forty, somewhere in that neighborhood, maybe forty. We had Ken and Marge Sowards and the Dukes and everybody around town. Ashtons, we had Ralph and Stew and all of them. We had a great time, had a lot of fun. The Ashtons were good folks. They were a lot of fun, Ralph and Stew and Mary and all of them.

KI: I was just born too late, I guess!

John: Oh! We had a good time. When you asked me about doing this, I was just reflecting back on all the things we've done and enjoyed. Like I said, with the Bar, maybe I've been too active. I did a lot of things in the Utah State Bar when I was young and still do some, but not like I used to. Once you become a past president as Jimmy Lee says, "There's nothing further past than a past." Once you're past, you're past, and that's it. Jim Lee is Brack Lee's son, who's a lawyer in Salt Lake and a real good friend of mine, a close friend. Scotty Matheson is a good friend of mine, a very good friend. They were all old, past presidents. We had Scotty Matheson and Jim Lee and Tom Green.

End of tape.

Interviewer's note: After the taped interview was complete, John told me he had played a sixteen-inch drum while he was in junior high school. He remembered traveling to Pocatello, Idaho, to play in a competition, as well as going to competitions in American Fork, Utah.

He has received numerous awards during his professional career.